

LABOUR ORGANISER

NOVEMBER 1946

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SITUATIONS VACANT

BANBURY DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with national agreement. Forms upon which application is to be made can be obtained from **Coun. P. Gilkes, 118, Bath Road, Banbury, Oxon.**, to whom they must be returned not later than 30th November, 1946.

STROUD DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Forms upon which application is to be made can be obtained from the **Secretary, Stroud Divisional Labour Party, The Labour Club, Cainscross Road, Stroud, Glos.**, to whom they must be returned not later than 23rd November.

SHIPLEY DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with national agreement. Forms upon which application is to be made can be obtained from the **Secretary, Councillor A. E. Roberts, J.P., Shipley Divisional Labour Party, 114, Shipley Fields Road, Frizinghall, Bradford**, to whom they must be returned not later than 30th November, 1946.

BOSWORTH DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY (Leicestershire).—Applications are invited for the position of **Full-time Secretary-Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Forms of application are obtainable from **G. E. Dearing, 24, Glebe Road, Hinckley, Leics.**, to whom they must be returned not later than November 23rd, 1946.

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Tell Us Your Story

WE hope you like our new cover. It is the work of Michael Middleton, of Head Office, whose job it is to make our Party publications look more cheerful and attractive. The elegant new cover on the Bournemouth Conference Report is also one of Michael's efforts.

We hope, too, the new cover will help us to gain new readers for the Labour Organiser. For some time past our circulation has been rising steadily. We want this increase to continue until the vast majority of key workers in the Party—of whom it is estimated there are upwards of 20,000—are readers of our journal.

To win these additional readers we shall need your help. Many parties are particularly successful at one aspect of Party work. Tell us about it. Your Party's story can make an interesting article for this journal. You will read in this issue how the Musselburgh ward party are running a very successful dance hall. We want more such stories of fruitful endeavour.

Or you may yourself have an idea on recruiting, publicity, or the hundred and one other aspects of Party work. Let's hear about it. Anything that contributes to the successful running of a local Party will interest our readers. Keep the articles brief—about 800 words is usually a good size—and send them to the Editor at Transport House.

Let's Sweep The Countryside

Plans for the Rural Campaign

By MORGAN PHILLIPS, Secretary, The Labour Party

The Labour Party is in the countryside to stay—and to grow. That must be the keynote of our campaign in rural Britain, which opened on October 15th with the first of a series of nationwide conferences arranged by the National Executive Committee.

Within the next six months the countryside must ring with the story of our Government's great work for agriculture, and of its bold plans to provide a better deal for all who work on the land.

Twenty-nine Conferences will be held by the end of 1946, while plans are in hand for at least a further forty-four to be arranged in the first three months of next year. These Conferences will be held in selected centres throughout the country.

I have already stated that there are no longer any "backward areas" marked on Headquarter's maps, and that all rural seats are now "possibles." I want this aspect to be firmly fixed in the minds of our rural Party workers, because I believe it to be perfectly true.

The purpose of this rural campaign is not only to consolidate Labour's position in the countryside, but to develop new and vigorous centres of Labour Party activity in areas where little or nothing has been done in the past.

The Conferences

Present plans are for the following number of Conferences to be held in the various regions:

Lancashire and Cheshire, 13; Yorkshire, 7; Northern, 5; West Midlands, 10; East Midlands, 13; South-Western, 6; Eastern, 10; Scotland, 3; Wales, 4. While additional Conferences will be held in Kent and Berkshire. Others may be added as the campaign progresses.

At most Conferences there will be two speakers, one a member of the Parliamentary Party's Agriculture and Food Group, who will deal with the

work of the Government as affecting rural areas. The other will have expert knowledge of agricultural problems, either an officer of one of the farm workers' unions or a practical farmer.

Conference "Invite"

The attractive Conference invitation, under the title "What the Government is doing for Rural Britain," is to be sent not only to all Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative organisations, but also to branches of the National Farmers' Union, Young Farmers' Clubs, Poultry Breeders' Association, Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes and similar bodies. We want the widest possible representation at these Conferences.

Rallying Points

These Rural Conferences, important as they are, must not be left as mere isolated events in the various constituencies. To do so would be like leaving a job half-done. They must become rallying points for the preparation of extensive educational and propaganda work in the towns and villages of our countryside.

It is to be hoped that each constituency party will arrange a large public meeting over the same week-end as their respective Conference. The Party's Regional Officer will arrange for the visiting speakers to take additional meetings if at all possible.

Party representatives at the Conference should take the fullest possible notes of points made by the speakers, and with these notes, and the special literature being prepared, should ensure that adequate plans are made for a special drive in their own areas. Every town and village of the rural constituencies should receive a visit from our speakers within the next six months.

Don't say we have not got the speakers. We have. But—please do not write to Head Office for them. Head

Office is supplying speakers for the Conferences and will no doubt be able to assist with the larger meetings, but there are really effective speakers in the regions to ensure the success of this campaign. Regional Councils have compiled excellent speakers' panels and both constituency parties and county federations should draw up a list suitable for use in this campaign in their own areas.

Remember the T.U.s

Do not ignore the trade union branches. Ask them to receive a speaker to give a brief talk on the Government's work and plans, and also enlist support of union members in this campaign.

Have we the personnel to carry through this campaign? To-day membership is increasing by leaps and bounds—no less in rural areas than in the big towns and cities. Many rural parties—in Cambridgeshire, Bucks., Norfolk and elsewhere—are doing absolutely first-rate work. New parties are being formed every week. At the present time we have more effective machinery for carrying through an intensive rural campaign than ever before. We must use it and use it well.

This requires planning. Don't just scramble along without method. See that this item receives prior place on the agenda for your next Divisional meeting. County Federations must also give it special consideration. The urban areas, through the Federation or Regional machinery, can be brought into this work by co-operating in sending parties of members into neighbouring rural areas over week-ends to help with village meetings, the conduct of a canvass and the distribution of literature.

A special sub-committee should be speedily appointed with adequate powers to proceed with the campaign. Local Labour Parties and small units should be brought into close association with the drive, even though direction remains with the constituency organisations. Secure the maximum publicity from your efforts by ensuring that regular reports are submitted to the local and county press.

County constituencies might well hold Day Schools to further the points made at the Rural Conferences. Regional Councils, if necessary, in collaboration with Head Office, would

be able to assist in the supply of suitable lecturers.

The Coming Elections

If the constituency has a Labour Member, use him so that he is able to take a personal message into all areas—do not merely confine him to the larger townships to the exclusion of the villages. Should weather conditions permit, short open-air meetings with a loudspeaker might be arranged for the villages (the visit having been previously publicised). If your party has no loudspeaker equipment, and cannot purchase one at present, seek the co-operation of a neighbouring urban division for aid. These open-air meetings should be accompanied by literature distribution and opportunity be taken to secure names with a view to starting a local party or group.

Remember—as this campaign reaches its climax next March, county areas will be preparing for a further onslaught on the Rural and District Councils. The success of this rural drive will without doubt be reflected in further electoral gains in the countryside.

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WHAT QUESTIONNAIRE REVEALS

The Facts on Agents' Pay

By R. STANTON, General Secretary, National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents

There should now be going on in the District Meetings, discussions on our Charter scheme, based on the News Letter recently circulated to members, as well as Rules Revision, and the results of the recent questionnaire.

The Executive looks for substantial progress as a result of these discussions. In passing, it is interesting to record, that in connection with the suggestion of varying rates, the London Co-operative Society has already decided to follow what applies elsewhere and pay London Political Agents £30 per annum above the basic rate.

Security—But not for Agents!

The questionnaire, as I hinted last month, has produced a factual statement of Agency conditions which is far from satisfactory. Over *one-third* of the replies indicate very doubtful prospects for the maintenance of future salary payments.

Practically 50 per cent. of the appointments made were made without any guarantee of salary, which prompts the suggestion that the Union should have an opportunity of satisfying itself that salary payments are guaranteed for a minimum time, BEFORE appointments are made.

Grants from Trade Unions and individuals are shown to be in an unsatisfactory state. The varying amounts, methods and conditions of payment indicate a need for an overhaul of the whole system. I am, of course, mindful that there are "interests." But this will be a test as to whether "interests" of individuals and organisations are to persist in opposition to the present and future welfare of the movement.

Is This Our Job?

Members have been asked to give some thought to a definition of Agency duties. Is it, as appears from the replies, to give up to 50 and even 100 per cent. of our time raising money, largely to pay our own salaries?

For of 57 members giving an estimate of the time they spend on football competitions, sweeps, dances, etc., 15 estimate 50 to 100 per cent., 16 estimate 25 to 50 per cent., 25 estimate 10 to 25 per cent., 1 estimates less than 10 per cent.

A conservative estimate of the money so raised is given as £25,000. Can we be complacent about this?

Life Membership for G.R.S.

The Executive decided to invite Lord Shepherd to accept life membership of the Union, in the sense of the amendment to the rule suggested by the Executive. That is, "in recognition of long service in the Party, and distinguished service to the Union." This decision will carry, I am certain, the unanimous approval of the Union, and I am happy to say that the invitation has been accepted.

Yorkshire Changes

Congratulations to Len Williams on his appointment as Assistant National Agent. Len has been a very valued colleague of the Union Executive for a number of years, representing the Yorkshire District, of which he was also Secretary. It is unfortunate that we have to lose him in the midst of our present activities, but I feel that his loyal service to the Union will continue, and maybe function in a quarter where it will be greatly needed in the near future.

Len is succeeded as District Secretary by Ewan Carr, and if precedent is followed, Ewan will join the Executive, though this will, of course, be determined by the Yorkshire members. *But whether as District Secretary only, or District Secretary and E.C. member, the Union will have drawn into its officership another stalwart whose long experience is coupled with an idealism undimmed by the day to day life of a Political Agent. I am glad to welcome as a colleague one whose friendship I first secured in the early twenties in the I.L.P.*

VARIED REACTIONS TO REDISTRIBUTION

Sweeping Changes in North

By W. B. LEWCOCK
(District Organiser) Northern Region

The recommendations of the Boundary Commission for Parliamentary Constituencies for the four counties in the Northern Region have now been considered by the constituency parties, and the reactions are as varied as the recommendations. Some parties are pleased with the new set-up, whilst others are just the opposite. In fact, when the recommendations were considered by the parties in the North Riding, it was found impossible to reach any kind of agreement to put forward alternative proposals. It is likely that the same attitude will be taken in the other counties, not so much because of the lay-out of the constituencies, but because of the Local Government implications.

In Durham, for example, two new Parliamentary Boroughs are to be created, namely Felling and Hebburn and Jarrow and Boldon, and in addition Houghton-le-Spring is to be included in the Parliamentary Borough of Sunderland. It is reasonable to assume that the Local Government Boundary Commission will take these areas out of the Administrative County. This will mean a loss of at least one-third of the rateable value of the county. Therefore, strong opposition to the proposals can be expected.

Three Constituencies Go

Northumberland fares better in respect to Local Government Boundary implications, as only one Urban authority, i.e., Newburn, is included in a Parliamentary Borough Division.

Generally, the Commission's proposals tend to tidy up the Local Government areas, and in almost every case have included the whole of an Authority's area in a Parliamentary Division. There are exceptions, of course, as at Gateshead, where three wards have been taken from the Borough and put into the new Parliamentary Borough of Felling and Hebburn, and at South Shields, where two wards are put into the new Parliamentary Borough of Jarrow and Boldon.

The proposals for the four counties

in the Northern Region involve a loss of three constituencies, two in Cumberland and one in Durham. The Municipal Boroughs of Workington and Whitehaven and two Rural Districts make one Division. Carlisle is to take in the very widely scattered Rural District of Border, whilst Penrith and Cockermouth takes in the major portion of North Cumberland Division, together with the Urban District of Maryport and some other parts of the Workington Division. This new constituency covers a huge area in which there are two mountain ranges and the greater part of the Lake District. It will certainly give the election agent one big headache when planning his election meetings.

In Labour's Favour

In Northumberland, the Wansbeck Division disappears and the Blyth Parliamentary Borough is created, comprising the Municipal Borough of Blyth and the Urban Districts of Seaton Valley and Whitley Bay. Other parts of Wansbeck go into Morpeth, Hexham, Berwick and Newcastle West.

The four constituencies in Newcastle have now got more or less equal electorates and embrace the municipal boundary with the addition of Newburn Urban District. The West and Central Divisions have been strengthened from a Labour point of view, whilst the North has been improved by the addition of a solid Labour Ward.

Taken as a whole the proposals for this county are in our favour, because we should hold the number of seats we now have and greatly improve the chance of victory in Berwick, owing to its acquisition of a fairly large mining area. Hexham, however, deteriorates by the inclusion of the Rural area of Castle Ward R.D.

It is in Durham where the greatest disturbance has occurred. Two constituencies have completely disappeared, namely Spennymoor and Sedgefield, and so have the names of Blaydon and Seaham.

In the case of Blaydon, three parts of its area goes into Consett, and in

regard to Seaham three parts go into the new Easington Division. Complications regarding candidatures are not likely to arise in these two Divisions, but the present members of Sedgefield and Spennymoor will have to look elsewhere for a seat as both their Divisions have been absorbed by neighbouring constituencies.

Barnard Castle, which had only 27,000 electors at the last election, now is to have an electorate of 60,000 and will cover about one third of the area of the county. The remainder of the Divisions in Durham are reasonably compact and easily workable.

The loss of one seat in Durham is a severe blow because we hold the whole of the 18 seats. The proposed changes will certainly strengthen some of the weaker Divisions, but will not affect the Party adversely to any extent.

So far as the North Riding is concerned, the proposals are not so good. The inclusion of Eston Urban District in Middlesbrough East greatly improves an already safe seat, but it severely weakens the Cleveland Division. Over 20,000 electors are taken from Cleveland and, owing to an error in figures given to the Commission, it will only have an electorate of 44,000.

The Municipal Borough of Thornaby has been taken from Stockton and placed in the widely scattered Richmond Division. This certainly improves this Division and makes it an intriguing proposition, but it does not compensate for the loss suffered by Cleveland.

Variety of Changes

Looking at the proposals as a whole, one can say that the outstanding feature is the variety of changes that are to take place. Only five Divisions, Chester-le-Street, Darlington, Hartlepool, Wallsend and Tynemouth, remain largely as they were. All the others have been altered, some so much that they are no longer recognisable, whilst others just disappear.

Many problems will have to be solved in the establishment of the new constituency parties, which will require much tolerance and good feeling from the party and affiliated organisations. The question of the fair allocation of cash and in some cases property, and perhaps the apportionment of debt, will cause much discussion, but this and other difficulties that might arise will be easily settled if the interest of the party is taken as the guiding principle.

The Parliamentary Fighting Front

By LORD SHEPHERD

More Parliamentary candidates are steadily being endorsed for the next General Election. The constituencies selecting six of them afford a picture of Labour's uphill fight in non-industrial England and Wales. The last General Election saw big developments in them all, and it is to be hoped that progress towards victory will be maintained.

South Molton

This Devonshire constituency occupies a huge area in central Devon. Its towns are noted for the beauty of their names rather than their size and importance. Crediton, Chulmleigh, Hatherleigh, Okehampton, Great Torrington and North Tawton. Formerly a Liberal constituency, it has more recently returned a Tory and a National Liberal. The Labour Party first entered the field in 1929, polling 2,731 votes and losing its deposit in a

three-cornered fight. With the Tory out of the way in 1931, Labour's poll rose to 3,499, but without saving its deposit. In 1935 the Labour electorate rose to 5,610 and at the last General Election to 9,140. The candidate, Capt. C. D. C. Lang, has been re-selected for the next General Election.

Saffron Walden

Dr. J. J. Mallon, of Toynbee Hall, was the first Labour candidate in this constituency, polling 4,531 votes in 1918. He was succeeded by Mr. W. Cash, as Labour standard-bearer in the elections 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1929, and who in three-cornered fights, raised Labour's poll to 8,642. Stanley Wilson, who has been Mayor of Saffron Walden, polled 6,468 votes in 1931, and jumped to 15,792 in 1945. Between those two elections Mrs. Rackham, of Cambridge, polled 9,633. Mr. Wilson has been re-

selected for the next General Election.

This constituency, with the exception of Halstead, an old seat of the silk industry, is rural in character, and the Liberal vote has been largely absorbed by the Conservative and Labour Parties.

Yeovil

In the elections of 1918, 1922 and 1923 and at a by-election in the same year, Labour's candidate was W. T. Kelly, a member of the A.E.U., but then associated with the Workers' Union. He afterwards became Member of Parliament for Rochdale. He polled 7,589 votes in 1918 and only 5,080 in 1923. This constituency and the one immediately above are illustrations of the fact that a man may remain too long as candidate in any one constituency. Hamilton Fyfe, at one time Editor of the "Daily Herald"; Mr. F. C. R. Douglas, an ex-Member for North Battersea and now Governor of Malta; Mr. A. E. Millett and Major Macpherson have been candidates at subsequent elections. All of them were of good quality, and their polls, which ranged from 5,000 to 7,500 until last year, are an indication of the strength of Liberalism in the South West. Major Macpherson in 1945 polled 16,641 votes, with the Liberal third on the poll with 11,000 votes, and he has been re-elected to fight the next General Election.

Epsom, Sutton and Cheam

These two Surrey constituencies have selected Mr. Richard Bishop, a Quaker, and Mrs. H. O. Judd, respectively. Mr. Bishop is a new candidate and Mrs. Judd fought the same constituency at the last General Election.

The first Labour candidate for the old Division was no less a person than Sergeant J. Chuter Ede, now Home Secretary; in 1918 he polled 4,796 votes. Dr. Somerville Hastings followed in 1922 and polled 6,571 votes. The Labour vote fell to 5,807 in 1923; 5,149 in 1924, and at a by-election in 1928, with Miss Helen Keynes as candidate, to 3,719. The Rev. Stanley Morgan, well-known in Kent County Council affairs, was candidate in 1929, 1931 and 1935, with polls rising from 7,662 to 19,286. This latter poll appears to be good, but the electorate in the meantime had risen from 63,000 to 105,000.

Before the last General Election the Epsom Division was divided into two,

with a combined electorate of 128,208. In the Epsom Division, Lt.-Comdr. E. Shackleton, now M.P. for Preston, polled 20,533 votes, and Mrs. Judd 17,293, or a total poll of 37,826. The figures show that there is plenty of room for development in Labour politics before these two constituencies can guarantee Labour successes at elections.

Denbigh

This North Wales seat has been the home of National Liberalism, a place in which the Tory vote, coupled with the gilt-edged Liberal vote has stood up to the attempts of free Liberalism to maintain its integrity. The Coalition first formed by Lloyd George in 1918 was fought by a Labour candidate, the late Mr. E. T. John, when he polled 2,958. Not until 1935 did a Labour candidate enter the lists once more when Mr. J. R. Hughes polled 4,963. In 1945, however, in a three-cornered fight, Lieut.-Comdr. Mars-Jones, the Labour candidate polled 11,702 votes, and although third on the poll was little more than 5,000 behind the leader, the National Liberal. Mars-Jones has again been selected to fight Labour's battle.

Given greater resources, more propaganda and greater efficiency in organisation, all the above constituencies are within reach of Labour representation.

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THEY RUN A £90 A WEEK DANCE HALL

Musselburgh is in the Big Money

By WILLIAM SHAW, Secretary, Musselburgh Labour Party

This story of one of the most successful projects of its kind ever organised by a ward party shows what can be achieved by enterprise and team spirit.

The year 1924 saw the birth of the Musselburgh Labour Ward Committee of the East Edinburgh Divisional Labour Party. In that year also, having no funds when the municipal elections came along, members had to dig deep into their pockets to find the necessary cash. Loans were even given by members, which were latterly repaid.

In the following years, sales of work, jumble sales, prize draws, garden fetes, stop watch competitions, Derby draws, and also Xmas draws, were organised to raise cash to contest the elections, which was all too soon swallowed up. As the elections again approached, this had all to be gone over again. Socials were also organised, which proved very successful. So successful were they that the Hall owner got jealous of our success, and refused to let the hall to the Committee.

Dance Club

Our Committee didn't give up the idea of socials and dancing, and we were fortunate enough to engage another smaller hall, where they decided to organise Saturday evening dancing. Our first attempt was unsuccessful, but we did not give up hope. We agreed to continue the next Saturday, but it also was a failure, so also was the following Saturday. We got a bit perturbed at our continued losses, members met and decided as a final throw to form a dance club.

Membership cards were printed, name of club, dance hall, member's name, secretary's name, and time of dancing appeared on the front page, the back page contained the rules of the club, while the middle of the card was divided into squares for stamping purposes. As a member entered the hall the card was stamped, and, provided there were a certain amount of attendances recorded, at the finish of the quarter, the member was invited to a free ball.

Committee members distributed these cards to any likely dancer they met during the week. Saturday arrived

once more, the dancers rolled up with their cards, and at the finish we were £1 to the good. The following Saturday we cleared £3 profit, and the next Saturday we had to close the doors, so great was the demand for admission. We continued to clear from the £4 to £5 per Saturday, but as this hall was now too small to accommodate our patrons, we were forced to look for pastures new.

The Committee were fortunate to secure the let of a larger hall, and luckily for us our patrons followed, and we were clearing from £8 to £12 on a Saturday night. Alas the owners here got jealous, too, and told us they required the hall for their own use, so we had to resort back to our previous, and now, much too small hall. Our patrons again followed, but owing to the smallness of the hall, some could not gain admission, which forced the executive committee to consider the question of securing premises of our own.

Hall Purchased

As we had by this time accumulated over £200 and all debts cleared, the committee agreed to search for a suitable site to build a hall; contact was made with a local building contractor, who had property to sell, and after inspecting the property, the executive agreed to recommend that a purchase be made. The price desired was £800, so we had to borrow £600, while we knew that the profit made from the Saturday night's dancing would pay for the necessary fittings and furniture.

The hall was opened in April, 1933, by Mr. Arthur Woodburn. Members of the Party gathered at the western boundary of the town, and headed by the town's band marched through the streets to the new Labour Hall.

The weekly dancing was, of course, transferred to the Labour Hall, and extra nights dancing were organised as occasions demanded, which resulted in the Labour Party being able to clear off the loan, and becoming the

proud possessors of the Labour Hall in three years' time.

Our dancing was so successfully run that the hall became engaged every night, and to take a very successful year, for example 1944, our drawings totalled £3,200, while refreshment bar receipts amounted to £1,200. This from a political outlook, had its drawbacks, as members desirous of organising political meetings demanded the hall, which meant the curtailment of the sequence of dancing, a very bad thing, so other halls had to be booked for political meetings.

Members became a bit disgruntled at this, and finally forced the executive to look for additional premises, whereby the political side of the movement could be catered for, so as to allow the dancing, our financial fountain, to continue in the Labour Hall.

The Secretary was asked to look around for a suitable place; the same contractor was again approached, and at night by their combined efforts, they invited the executive committee of the Party to meet in what is now known as the Labour Club, to decide whether or not a purchase should be made. They ultimately agreed to offer £825 for the premises, and this being the highest offer was accepted. We now have a beautiful suite of rooms with a caretaker residing on the premises to satisfy all our political requirements, as far as meetings are concerned.

The Receipts

Our hall and club premises, valued at £1,625 is now shown on our financial annual statement as having been depreciated to the extent of £1,475, leaving £150, which will be written off at the end of this financial year, all our furniture and fittings have already been written off.

Our investments in the Co-operative, War Savings, etc., amount to £2,463. The dancing in the Labour Hall continues to be very popular, the drawings averaging £65 per week, while the bar receipts amount to £25 per week. The annual profit from the bar is sufficient to pay all our taxes, while the lets at the Labour Club are sufficient to make the Club a paying proposition. Of course the Income Tax authorities come down on us very heavily, as in the year 1944 we had to pay them £970.

At the present moment we have

formed another dance club to entice the dancing youth in our town to patronise the Labour Hall dancing. Membership cards have been printed on the same lines as the previous ones. Sufficient attendances on the Friday evenings, which is considered a slack evening, will entitle the member to be invited to a free Christmas ball. We have also engaged a tutor, who instructs beginners and advanced dancers, on the Friday evenings, and also on the Saturday afternoons. Permission is granted to the beginners to remain during the dancing session on the Friday evenings after their class.

The small fee that is charged for admission to the Saturday afternoon class pays for the tutor and also the lighting of the hall. Gramophone records supply the music for these classes through a loud speaker. Musical evenings are to be arranged in the Labour Hall on Sunday evenings for the club members. One shilling is to be charged for admission which entitles the member to refreshment, cup of tea and cake, and musical interludes are supplied by gramophone; also we are endeavouring to secure the services of sporting celebrities to give talks to the members, and hope also to squeeze in a political one now and again; dancing is, of course, prohibited. This proposal has gone beyond our dreams; we have enrolled over 300 members already.

Parties Visit Musselburgh

Last year we housed the Scottish Labour Party Conference in our hall, at which both Mr. and Mrs. Attlee were present. Owing to the publicity we received during this conference, Labour Parties all over Scotland have organised outings to Musselburgh this year to see what we in Musselburgh have been able to accomplish. Up to the present we have had to cater for 1,400 Party Members, and some parties are yet to come.

All this could never have been accomplished had the loyal band of voluntary workers, with that team spirit instilled into them, not sacrificed a certain amount of home comforts, and also their leisure moments. They voluntarily attended the dancing as stewards, some of them every night in the week, after finishing their daily

toil, for bear in mind our membership is 100 per cent. working-class.

This has all been accomplished by a Ward Committee, and what we have done in Musselburgh, can be accomplished elsewhere. Remember, irrespec-

tive of how poor your Party may be, the Musselburgh Committee in 1924 was just as poor. It just needs a beginning, develop the team spirit, and as Herbert Morrison said during the war, "GO TO IT."

RECRUITING IN THE SUBURBS

Personal Touch Wins New Members

By V. E. CARPENTER, Agent, Wimbledon, Merton & Morden D.L.P.

The return of A. M. F. Palmer as the Labour Member for the Parliamentary Borough of Wimbledon was one of the unexpected Labour victories—at least, to those outside the constituency. It must be true to say that this success was due in no small part to the fact that the Party never ceased functioning during the war years—meetings of all kinds were held frequently and, although there were changes, the Party always had a prospective Parliamentary candidate, and the Constituency was therefore "nursed" by the Party long before the General Election came along.

The Party had, however, dwindled to an extent as regards membership, and a process of setting things in order began as soon as the war was over. To appreciate how the job of increasing membership has been tackled, I must give a brief picture of the set-up of the Constituency. There are two Local Labour Parties; Merton and Morden Labour Party is based on the Local Government area of the Merton and Morden Urban District Council consisting of nine wards, and the Wimbledon Labour Party is based on the area of the Wimbledon Borough Council and has eight wards.

Different Groups

North Wimbledon is a Tory stronghold—well-to-do people living in large houses with surrounding grounds, or in smart, modern, detached villas—while South Wimbledon is a crowded, ugly jumble of working-class houses. While the major part of the Labour vote may be found in South Wimbledon, there is quite a number of the older type of Conservative working-class people who believe that the "gentry" are ordained to rule. Merton and Morden does not offer such a

strong contrast, but there is a solid middle-class Conservative area, and on the post-war jerry-built estates there are people struggling to buy their own houses who regard Labour with suspicion and who may support the Conservatives with a vague feeling that they are protecting their own interests. In addition, there is a vast L.C.C. Estate (strongly Labour) and here and there may be found groups of the old, grey working-class streets.

The Merton and Morden Labour Party was stronger numerically than the Wimbledon Labour Party, and at the end of 1945 the total membership was 1,396. On the basis of a Labour vote at the General Election of 30,188, we were expected to bring our individual membership up to 3,000. This is the story of how we set about achieving this.

Target—3,000

The Wimbledon Borough Council Elections last November, and the Merton and Morden Urban District Council Elections in March (when a Labour majority was returned for the first time), gave a further indication of where our Labour supporters were, and in April a plan for our membership campaign was drawn up.

The target was a minimum of 3,000 individual members, and the major effort was to be spread over the months of May, June and July. The central arrangements included a big demonstration in the Town Hall with the M.P. as the main speaker, and smaller, more intimate meetings in the different wards. Special posters were designed, and the local press contacted. One of our chief propaganda assets is loudspeaker equipment.

We bought this before the General Election, and we consider that "it has

earned its keep." It was most useful, to put it mildly, during the General Election and the Local Government Elections, and it has been hired out to various organisations as well as advertising all sorts of activities for ourselves. During the membership campaign the loudspeaker had plenty of use.

Appeals were sent to Trade Union branches, a specially-planned letter being sent to them, and invitations for speakers were welcomed.

Each ward drew up a letter, written in a friendly manner, to be delivered to Labour supporters, together with a membership application form, and arrangements were made to canvass each recipient within a day or two afterwards. Great care was taken in drafting the letter, so that it would convey the right approach for that particular ward, and the canvassers planned out their own angle of tackling this job so as to interest the people, they called upon. *It was realised that the essence of membership recruiting is the personal contact, and this was emphasised over and over again.*

Doorstep Work

The result was a great increase in membership, and our present task is to maintain an active interest in the Party, but looking back on the membership campaign, I feel sure that what helped more than anything else to get new members was "doorstep work." *To get new members, we must go to their homes and enrol them.* We prepared over 5,000 individual letters and circulated 8,000 membership leaflets. Where possible, we worked on the basis of our canvass records. In one or two wards, where the organisation had been weaker at the time of the elections, it was necessary to rely on the personal contacts of the members. A "Progress Report Form," which was sent to the ward secretaries to be filled in at the start of the campaign, indicated the method of recruiting in each ward.

This Form was all-embracing in the information which it sought, and was intended to give me a complete picture of the Ward's plans and requirements in the campaign. On the whole, the ward secretaries took great care in completing the Form and returning it to me, and I was able to keep in touch with the progress of the campaign.

When any questions arose, or there were any difficulties, or any suggestions to be discussed, there were informal meetings of the ward officials and members concerned, and, once begun, the campaign was kept going without pause or interruption until the whole plan had been carried out.

The new members were all immediately invited to ward meetings, and, now that Local Government elections are in the offing again, they are being trained to play their part in the work of the Party and when the next membership drive takes place it is hoped that they will be there. The first difficulty is to overcome shyness in undertaking doorstep work. Many people lack confidence and are afraid that they may be bested in argument.

The remedy is, I feel sure, to provide facilities for discussions on the policy and purpose of the Labour Party, to hold conferences and day schools, and to provide all our keen members with a good knowledge of the fundamental principles and the work of the Labour Party, as well as the present-day legislation of the Labour Government.

Do all your
KEY
WORKERS
read the
LABOUR
ORGANISER ?

USE THE LOCAL PRESS

Get Your "Copy" in Early

Further extracts from the booklet "Putting It Over" which has been prepared by a group of Labour journalists and publicity experts to help local Labour Parties.

Now examine the contents of these pairs of pages. You will find, perhaps, that the Tuesday pages contain regular features and advertisements; that the Wednesday morning pages contain rather long news stories and more regular features, like cinema and week-end sport; that the Wednesday afternoon pages are all news items, big and little; and that the Thursday morning pages are confined to big, last-minute news and very brief items.

Be Early

Having mastered the anatomy of your local newspaper, you will act accordingly. Generally, you will deliver copy as early in the week as possible. Under no circumstances will you hold up your report of a Saturday event until Wednesday or Thursday. Instead you will deliver it on Tuesday so that it can make page 3 on Wednesday morning. By so acting, you will assist the newspaper, get good results for yourself and the Party, and ensure that, when you have really big news happening on Wednesday, the newspaper will be prepared to reserve space for you on Thursday morning.

All this means that local newspaper relations is a job for a comrade willing and able to specialise on it. It is not a job for an already over-worked secretary. The ideal comrade is one who knows the area intimately, can make friends with local reporters, and is on the telephone.

The role of the secretary should be to see that the local newspaper is invited officially to all the Party's public meetings, that its representative is treated with friendly courtesy, and that reasonable facilities are available to enable him to do his job—a table and a chair should be within easy reach of the door, since the reporter may want to run out to telephone part of the speech to a national daily.

Those Leakages

Local Labour Party officials can be as pompous and difficult as Cabinet Ministers about "leakages" — these

being the publication of information before the officials, for one reason or another, believe that publication is convenient to themselves. To this problem, there is only one answer.

Officials must realise that pomposity is not necessary to their dignity. Your local newspaper representative should be told everything that is of public interest. He can be asked frankly to delay publication of this or that item, and he will agree rather than foul a valuable contact. But he must never be let down by having withheld from him news which, almost certainly, will "leak" to his newspaper from another source.

Many local newspapers encourage letters from readers. Where this is so, your Party should encourage members to state the Labour point of view. But the letter writers, if not the letters themselves, should be organised, and for very good reason.

Letter-Writing

A badly phrased letter, even when its argument is good, carries little conviction. A badly reasoned letter, however well phrased, carries no conviction at all. Letters to the editor on political matters must reveal all the arts of advocacy. They must be clear, simple, answerable.

Every writer must be complete master of his case. He must remember that one fact can speak louder than many words. If he is to avoid irrelevancy, which bores the sympathetic reader and gives openings to the opposition for a crushing rejoinder, he must seek always to argue only one thesis and to establish it beyond doubt or dispute.

Letter writing is as specialised a job as public speaking. Encourage able comrades to specialise in it, to study constantly how best to present their case in local terms, and to study and profit by the ordinary public's reactions to their letters. This can be great fun—and a great contribution to the cause.

Making Money on Socials

By Coun. TOM VERNON (Hon. Sec. St. Marylebone D.L.P.)

The Secretary of a Party which has run many successful social events gives some advice on money raising.

In my belief, virtually every social activity and function should be organised to yield a profit and for the good reason that you cannot make money without giving good value. Having a final cash profit in mind as a "must," the organisers do a better job both in quality and businesslike efficiency. The need to show a profit is a very searching test of responsible members' capacity to originate attractive features or "stunts" and to do a thorough piece of work as to every single detail having to be handled.

Where the test of success in organising a social function is not the conclusive one of loss or profit, but members' satisfaction, there is no finality in judging the level achieved. People are charitable in their comments; opinions differ.

All of us at some time have been responsible for some very half-baked efforts, when we have slung a few commonplace ingredients together, cooked the amalgam on a very low gas and served up the concoction with a temperature not above tepid or nigh unto frozen. The required social has been held according to members' decision. Nobody liked it very much. The unhappy incident is buried.

Asking for Money

In this brief article I can attempt no more than to touch on a few general ideas which my own small experience has taught me to regard as fundamentals.

There must be no hesitation or false feeling about asking for money, due regard being paid to people's capacity, of course. Assume that members and supporters do want to help the Party financially and will respond to any opportunity offered them to do so if the organisers have done a conscientious job of work and can genuinely believe they are giving something in return.

If there are tickets, the entrance price should be fixed to attract maximum attendance and profit obtained

by selling-out refreshments (instead of sharing out gratis a too large remainder when the show is over), and by various money-raising devices, including maybe a collection. In brief, get all the people you can into your hall as a first aim and then start taking their money as a second aim.

It is foolish to assume that the mention of a social at a G.M.C. meeting, for example, and the routine placing of supplies of tickets with Ward Secretaries will ensure success. It is well to assume that the show, or whatever it is you are preparing, is doomed to failure unless you can exert such push, and inject such determined enthusiasm into everyone, as can conquer all the adverse factors and odd gremlins which threaten you.

For every show there must be two or three active people for whom it is, for the necessary period of time, the most important thing in the world, the centre of their thoughts, and the almost tiresomely unceasing refrain of their conversation. This purposeful and zealous drive must be present, I feel, in everything undertaken, however simple it may be in actuality. There are people who will want to damp down the propaganda and publicity on the naïve plea that "we shall get more people than the place can take." Pay no heed to that; pile on the publicity, always dreaming of "overflows"—though they seldom happen, it's true.

Think Boldly

Think boldly in your planning, and set difficult aims. You may not realise them all, but the nervous and mental activity evoked will none the less produce a final result much more advanced than possible to people doing the routine thing they know in a somewhat complacent and assured state of mind. If you have a choice, take the larger hall, and then really work to justify your courage.

Though "old tricks" have to be repeated, always try to add a new trick. Such new features can't always be originated from inside—borrow ideas from other organisations and the commercial field. Do not forget, ever, that radio and film have given people standards in judging quality which are pretty high.

As in a business enterprise where the aim is profit, it must not be expected to achieve much without making preliminary expenditure on a sufficient scale. If a thing has been planned and you know it can succeed if real work is done, you can spend boldly, intending that it shall come back tenfold, as it were.

Good Organising

Good organising in every field of work consists not only of orderly scheduling of every single thing which has to be done, but of seeing to it that each of those things is in fact done. Good preparatory work assures a smooth-running and successful social, of course, but it saves expense and accordingly increases the profit.

Without this preparation, over-expensive solutions are hastily adopted to each problem and, in the final eve-of-the-show crisis, you can find yourself buying your way out of trouble, in order to escape a fiasco. Everyone co-operating should have time to punt

quietly around seeking the loan of required things or ways of getting them cheaply.

The organisation of socials and the like is normally the job of some committee. But always there should be one person for each social or function having final executive responsibility and the right to make decisions on details, thus avoiding dangerous loose ends which it is no one person's business to tie up. Whoever has the responsibility I describe, anxious not to let himself down, will provide that extra ounce of push and verve which is always needed and which is not a quality of any collective unit, such as a committee. That responsible person must be very conscious it is his bottom will be spanked if shortcomings are discovered. It is not credit he is keen about, but immunity from deserved kicks.

Any reader of these jottings who has patiently read as far, in the hope I am going to mention some wonderful and novel stunt for raising money, is going to be disappointed. If I had such an idea, I would keep it for St. Marylebone! No, there is nothing especially new to be done, but everything we customarily do should be done better each time we do it. Not on account of mere repetition, however, but because we are never satisfied.

PARTY CONVERSATION

Pamphlets That Point The Way

By COLIN MacPHEE

Bouquet of the month goes to three local parties who have produced publications on local affairs which, for readability and elegance, are streets ahead of the usual run of political literature.

"Your Windsor Takes Shape" tells the story, and a grand story it is, of the achievements of the new Labour majority in the Royal Borough of Windsor. Beautifully illustrated and produced, this sixpenny booklet sets a standard which puts it right in the "quality" class." It should have a big sale not only in Windsor, but among other local parties who wish to publi-

cise their Labour group's achievements in a fitting and effective manner.

Brilliant Presentation

"Your Barnes," published by Barnes Labour Party, is equally elegant and puts forward Labour's Plan for a Brave New Barnes in telling and attractive fashion. There is little overt propaganda in this booklet, and perhaps in that fact lies a good deal of its effectiveness. Its fine illustrations and brilliant presentation of the case for Labour's New Barnes should ensure a ready sale and win many recruits for the local party. The booklet was edited by Leonard McNae.

"Our Wembley" is a vigorously-written publication which puts the case for a Labour Wembley clearly and effectively. It touches the right note of local patriotism. "Citizens of Wembley," it states, "are rightly proud of their Borough's fame, but those among them who have the success of local government at heart want it to be a place known for something more than its Stadium or its Empire Pool and Sports Arena."

Vivid Comparisons

There are excellent illustrations on several aspects of civic affairs, and a very graphic diagram showing "What Your Rates Buy." This chart shows how much each municipal service costs, and there are vivid and enlightening comparisons with the amounts paid for beer, football and cinemas.

With publications such these, local parties step right away from the conventional, amateurish printed propaganda of the past. We need more booklets of like calibre to make Britain conscious of Labour's work in the municipalities.

News Sheet Addresses

Are election addresses worth while? Some parties feel that the stereotyped election address is thrown aside unread by too many citizens and that we must think of some new method of putting our case across at election times.

For this month's elections a number of parties issued News Sheets instead of addresses. In this type of publication it is possible to deal with the election issues in a readable and newsy fashion, and perhaps more fully than in the customary election address. It is too early yet to say whether this type of publication is entirely successful but most parties who have tried it out seem pleased with the results. One of the best of the News Sheets was that produced by Hornsey Labour Party, which distributed different "editions" for each of the eight wards in the borough.

Attractive Programmes

Prize for arranging a really attractive autumn programme goes to Woking Labour Party, whose neatly-printed Events Card is just to hand.

Labour notabilities who will visit Woking to address meetings this autumn include Sir Frank Soskice,

Solicitor-General; Arthur Bottomley, Under-Secretary for the Dominions; Hannan Swaffer, and M.P.s Reg Sorensen and Dick Stokes. But as well as "big gun" speakers, Woking has arranged a lively series of meetings which should have much local appeal.

Councillor Amies, for instance, will debate Labour's foreign policy with Tom Gittins, who was the division's Labour candidate at the General Election; there will be a Brains Trust with the chairmen of council committees as the "Brains"; while there will also be discussion on such subjects as Housing, the Colonies, and the Middle East.

Woking promises its party members "something stimulating every week," and looks like fulfilling this promise 100 per cent. Another party with an attractive programme is Southend.

Hall Re-Opens

Woking also deserves praise for its excellent little stencilled monthly, which until recently was edited by Arthur Ballard. Ballard, unfortunately, had to leave the district and the Party's General Secretary, H. P. Groombridge, has now taken over. The journal still preserves the same high editorial content and it should prosper exceedingly under its new Editor.

The paper reports one piece of good news—that after five years the local Labour Hall is to be reopened. It is hoped that all present and past members of the Party will attend the re-opening ceremony on November 27.

Labour Directories

Another in the series of first-rate Labour directories, which is being issued by the Crabtree Press on behalf of local parties, is out. It covers Lewes D.L.P. and contains an extremely interesting short history of the Party by Dorothy Seymour, secretary of the D.L.P. There are biographical notes of all Labour councillors and J.P.s and much other useful information.

Similar directories are now being prepared for the Croydon, Horsham, and East Grinstead parties. Mr. Ernie Trory, of the Crabtree Press, writes that they are still able to include the compilation of a few more directories for 1947 and would particularly like to hear from D.L.P. or Borough Party secretaries in Sussex and Surrey. The directories are produced without any financial obligation to the parties concerned.

COUNSEL'S OPINION

Draws and Lotteries

From time to time we receive enquiries as to the basis upon which Local Parties can safely promote Draws and Raffles for the raising of funds.

Here is an opinion on the relevant provisions of the Betting and Lotteries Act of 1934.

The Conditions

I am asked whether it is legal under the Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934, for a local Labour Party to "run draws or raffles amongst their own members for raising funds."

I would first observe that for the purpose of the Act a draw or raffle constitutes a lottery in so far as the distribution of prizes by lot or chance is involved.

(a) A lottery promoted as an incident of an entertainment, e.g., a Labour Party social or bazaar would not be deemed to be an unlawful lottery provided certain conditions are observed. The conditions are as follows:—

- (i) The whole proceeds of the entertainment, including the proceeds of the lottery after the deductions are made for necessary expenses must be devoted to Labour Party purposes.
- (ii) None of the prizes of the lottery shall be money prizes.
- (iii) Tickets must be sold on the premises during the progress of the entertainment.
- (iv) The result of the raffle or draw must be declared on the premises and during the progress of the entertainment.
- (v) The holding of the lottery must not be the substantial inducement to persons to attend the entertainment.

(Section 23).

(b) Apart altogether from lotteries in connection with Labour functions a local Party would be entitled to promote a private lottery such as a draw or raffle provided the following conditions are concerned.

- (i) The sale of tickets must be confined to members of the Local Labour Party.

- (ii) The persons promoting the lottery must be authorised in writing by the Executive Committee of the Local Party.
- (iii) The whole proceeds after deducting expenses should be devoted partly to the provision of prizes and partly to Labour Party purposes. In other words, after payment of necessary expenses for printing and stationery and the provision of prizes for the purchasers of tickets the balance must be paid into the funds of the Local Party.
- (iv) There must be no written notice or advertisement of the lottery except (1) a notice exhibited on the Local Labour Party premises and (2) such as may be contained on the tickets themselves.
- (v) The price of every ticket must be the same and the price must be stated on the ticket.
- (vi) Every ticket must bear on its face the name and address of each of the promoters and a statement of the persons to whom the sale of tickets is restricted, also a statement that no prize won in the lottery will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the ticket was sold. No prize is to be paid except in accordance with such statement.

- (vii) No ticket can be issued except on sale and upon receipt of the full price thereof.

- (viii) Tickets must not be sent through the post. (Section 24.)

Provided the above conditions are observed, Local Labour Parties will incur no liability in respect of draws or raffles organised amongst their members for raising funds.



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